



Squash Mates

Insights and Advice

HOW TO CREATE A SOCIAL BUZZ





Welcome to Squash Mates!

Squash Mates is a flexible social squash programme that provides different groups of family members, friends and colleagues with the opportunity to hang out, have fun and play squash. It can also utilise the Scorehorse App, making it extremely easy to manage the draw and results.



Squash Mates can be tailored to meet your club's target audiences:

- Squash Business Mates – business house social leagues
- Squash School Mates – secondary school social leagues
- Squash Uni Mates – university social leagues
- Squash Super Mates – Masters social leagues

The programme is best suited to run on a week day evening or late weekend afternoon and can include optional coaching before matches start to give pointers on the game. There is no waiting as matches are guaranteed every round of around 15-30 minutes each.

Why you should use Squash Mates

Squash Mates is the perfect solution for your club and is an easy way for people to be introduced to the game of squash in a fun and social setting. Group programmes provides your members with enjoyable experiences and social interaction – their two main needs. Through active and fun games they will receive sufficient on-court time to achieve success and receive the many benefit playing squash offers.

Not only is Squash Mates a great magnet for social club players, but it is also an effective retention tool which will help them connect with other members and your club.

How to make Squash Mates work

Squash New Zealand will provide the tools and templates, logos and promotional materials. Your regional District Association will provide the support. But it's the club which actually makes the programme happen.

The club not only needs to implement Squash Mates, it also needs to provide constructive and regular feedback to Squash New Zealand so that we know what needs improving. In addition, we also need clubs to collect and submit information through Activity Reporting so that we can show progress to our major funders and potential sponsors to continue creating engagement.

What people want

People are looking for fun, social interaction and a bit of stress-relief from their daily lives at a time and cost that suits. They want to unwind, join in, improve their health and fitness and enjoy playing sport with others. Getting better and winning is important, but not a major influence.

Why people love Squash Mates

- Fun comes first with lots of game time to keep participants stimulated, engaged and healthy.
- Participants form connections with other people.
- Participants learn how to play, the rules, scoring system and leave with a sense of achievement.
- Being able to play without large time or cost commitments.

It is important that the Squash Mates programme highlights all of these elements in every session.

Structuring Squash Mates

Squash Mates is flexible and the duration can be adjusted base on court availability, number of players, etc.

Some alternatives:

- 4 week league run on a week day evenings with matches every 30 minutes and optional coaching provided 20 minutes before the start of play each week.
- 6 week league run on late weekend afternoons with matches every 20 minutes.
- 10 week league run on week day evenings with matches the best of 5 games played to 15 points.

When organising a Squash Mates programme, the club should expect that a range of abilities will be participating, including:

- Participants who have never played before.
- Participants who have received some basic coaching but never played outside a coaching environment.
- Participants returning after a long absence.

In the weeks leading up to the launch of your programme we recommend you provide some 'free tasters'. Analyse how many people attend these and ask them what days and times they prefer.

Post Squash Mates

It is essential that the coach provides interested players with opportunities to practice in between sessions in order to reinforce learning, develop confidence and to direct participants to suitable playing opportunities at the conclusion of the programme. Example opportunities include:

- Additional Squash Mates programmes
- Casual play opportunities with other participants and members
- Club nights
- Team-based events
- Interclub competitions
- Individual coaching sessions

Setting up Squash Mates

STEP 1: Establish your programme and membership goals

Setting participation and membership goals for your squash programmes is a must. Giving your club targets motivates and inspires its' members and gives them a sense of what is possible. From a club management perspective, you can plan your expenditure and prioritise your action plan based on the growth you can expect to see within your club.

	Baseline (NOW)	3-5 year target	1 year target	3 month target
Membership (number signed up each year)				
Participation (number attending each week)				

STEP 2: Schedule your programme

The ultimate benchmark of a timetable is the number of people it draws in. Always measure success by how many people are playing squash every week. Findings show you should offer 4 structured programmes throughout the year (spring, summer, autumn and winter versions). Findings show Wednesday and Thursday evenings after 6pm are the most popular days and times.

Questions to consider:

- How many people can you fit onto the available courts?
- Are you limited by the amount of balls and rackets you have?
- Are you planning to upskill enough people to deliver the programme?
- When does it suit people to come to your club?
- How long do people want to commit for?
- How does the event calendar affect your available court space?
- What will you do to promote your programmes?

STEP 3: Find and train a pool of coaches

One of the most important factors in the success of any programme is the quality of people who deliver it. A team of quality coaches can bring hundreds of people to your facility through retention, new membership sales and opportunities to grow. Use the Coach Recruitment Guide to help you attract and develop superstar coaches.



STEP 4: Let your members know

Boosting your participation and membership numbers depends on your club's ability to sell your programme to both existing members and future participants. Give them first-class knowledge so they can effectively communicate this to others.

- Introduce your club goals for the programme and membership.
- Get coaches to provide a taster of the programme so the rest of the membership can experience it and provide any suggestions.
- Give each member a copy of the programme information.

STEP 5: Promote the programme

- Tell everyone in your club, their friends and prospective members about your Squash Mates programmes.
- Use the FREE online marketing materials to create promotional documents, website content and newsletters.
 - Send promotional emails to your existing members and guests.
 - Put posters up around your club in common areas.
 - Hand flyers out to coaches, members, friends, networks and prospects to distribute as needed.
- Utilise the FREE community notice boards, your local radio station and newspapers.
- Use your website, social media pages and other online websites to promote each session. Keep adding photos and videos.

STEP 6: Report the programme

Collecting activity information can be used to identify the trends of what's working and where there's room for improvement. This enables you to accurately report on player participation, plan effective member retention strategies and make informed decisions about key club activities.

- Record the names of each individual who attends each session.
- Remember who delivers each session and at what location, on what day and at what time.
- Input these details into iSquash Activity Reporting.

A screenshot of the iSquash Activity Reporting web form. The form is titled "Activity Reporting" and includes fields for "District/Club" and "Reporting Period". Below these are input fields for "Start Date" and "End Date" (both in dd/mm/yyyy format), a "Coordinate" field, and a "Programme / Activity" dropdown menu. There are also checkboxes for "Male" and "Female", a "Sessions" input field, and a "Venue" dropdown menu. A "New Activity" button is located on the right side of the form, and a "Cancel" button is at the bottom right. A "Notes" field is at the bottom of the form.

- Give us your best SHOT by completing the post-programme survey.



TIPS FOR CLUBS:

Here's our suggestions for making the most out of Squash Mates...

- Talk with your committee and encourage them to offer Squash Mates.
- Decide on a suitable day and time for Squash Mates sessions to be held. Squash Mates should be open to both members and participants (non-members).
- Squash Mates should be user pay. We suggest a player per night fee ranging from \$7-\$10 depending on local circumstances.
- Consider giving a radio or newspaper office team FREE entry. The potential PR it could generate should be worth the investment.
- Use all the marketing resources provided to promote Squash Mates where you target audiences hang out.
- Use your club's Facebook page to promote the action from each round. Keep adding photos!
- Post videos from Squash Mates on YouTube – the funnier the better. You can also add these to your website and Facebook pages.
- List Squash Mates online through events websites.
- Make an evening of it! Get a BBQ fired up, open up the bar, offer refreshments, run a raffle, chat to local businesses to see if they can offer small spot prizes.
- It's always worth stating 'limited spaces' or 'sign up before X date to reserve your space' to encourage people to commit.

SAMPLE DRAW:

Here's an example programme schedule for 8 teams of 4 players played over 8 weeks:

No.	Teams	Playing Order	Refereeing Order
1	The Rackets	3142	4231
2	Double Dots	2314	1423
3	The Bouncers	4231	3142
4	Heavy Swingers	1423	2314
5	Sore Knees	3142	4231
6	Quick Feet	2314	1423
7	Lunge Lovers	4231	3142
8	The Killers	1423	2314

Week	Court 1	Court 2	Court 3	Court 4
1	2 vs 8	3 vs 4	1 vs 7	5 vs 6
2	4 vs 8	2 vs 7	3 vs 6	1 vs 5
3	7 vs 8	4 vs 6	2 vs 5	1 vs 3
4	6 vs 8	5 vs 7	1 vs 4	2 vs 3
5	5 vs 8	1 vs 6	3 vs 7	2 vs 4
6	1 vs 8	3 vs 5	2 vs 6	4 vs 7
7	3 vs 8	1 vs 2	4 vs 5	6 vs 7
8	FINALS			

FAQs

What do participants need for a Squash Mates league?

All they need is comfortable workout clothes, supportive shoes, a drink bottle and a sweat towel.

How often should new participants play squash?

For the best results we suggest they get on court at least twice a week. Take a look at our videos to help them learn the moves, or have them chat to a fellow club member for some tips.

How experienced do participants need to be?

The great news is that Squash Mates can be for people who have never played before, those who have received some basic coaching or participants returning after a long absence. It only takes a few sessions before they will start to feel comfortable on the court so encourage them to not give up!

What if participants say they can't do the moves?

The technique for squash is super simple so even the most inexperienced player will pick it up in no time. Remind them that the coach is there to work with them and provide them with challenges that meet their needs. They'll find their skills and fitness will improve over a number of sessions.

Important Facts

- ✓ Programmes should be open to both members (possibly discounted) and non-members. This will allow your club to cater for both membership retention and participation growth.
- ✓ Coaches should be incentivised to convert as many programme participants to club members as possible. We suggest either paying coaches a baseline plus commission, or paying them based on the number attending minus court hire costs. This means the coach will be motivated to convert new members, because then they can earn more!
- ✓ It is essential that the coach provides all players with opportunities to practice in between sessions in order to reinforce learning, develop confidence and to direct participants to suitable playing opportunities at the conclusion of the programme.

For more go to www.nzsquash.co.nz/play-squash/ways-to-play/squash-mates.cfm ->



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